

## **CLAIMS**

We claim:

- 1        1. A method for providing procurement services to a  
2        plurality of customer companies, comprising the steps of:
  - 3           establishing a user profile for each person authorized  
4           by a customer company to access said procurement  
5           services;
  - 6           associating each said company with a company group of  
7           related companies;
  - 8           said user profile specifying for each said user a user  
9           company and company group;
  - 10          providing for each procurement resource to be shared  
11          among said users a resource profile specifying for each  
12          resource those said companies to have access to said  
13          procurement resource; and

14           responsive to said user profile and said resource  
15           profiles, controlling user access to said procurement  
16           resources.

1       2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of  
2           providing said procurement resources in a front-end catalog  
3           and requisition server.

1       3. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:  
2           receiving a user request from a first client browser to  
3           log in to said front-end server;  
4           responsive to said request, providing a user interface  
5           at said client browser only to procurement resources  
6           authorized by said user profile and said resource  
7           profiles.

1       4. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:  
2           receiving requests from a plurality of users authorized  
3           by different company groups to enter a requisition to a

4 vendor with respect to the same catalog or contract  
5 resource; and

6 generating separate purchase orders to said vendor with  
7 respect to requisitions originating with users from  
8 each said company group.

1 5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

2 leveraging procurement buys from a plurality of company  
3 groups with respect to the same volume specific  
4 contract for goods or services.

1 6. The method of claim 2, further comprising the steps of:

2 allowing said user to apply procurement charges to  
3 charge centers only within his company group.

1 7. The method of claim 3, said procurement resources  
2 including a vendor catalog.

1       8. The method of claim 3, said procurement resources  
2       including a blanket order procurement contract for goods or  
3       services.

1       9. The method of claim 3, said procurement resources  
2       including a user profile table.

1       10. The method of claim 3, said procurement resources  
2       including costs centers.

1       11. The method of claim 3, said procurement resources  
2       including accounting general ledger codes with company group  
3       specific accounting rules and defaults.

1       12. System for providing procurement services to a  
2       plurality of customer companies, comprising:

3            a front end server;

4            a user profile for each person authorized by a customer  
5       company to access said procurement services;

6           each said company associated with a company group of  
7           related companies;

8           said user profile specifying for each said user a user  
9           company and company group;

10          a plurality of procurement resources to be shared among  
11          said users;

12          a resource profile for each said procurement resource  
13          specifying those said companies to have access to said  
14          procurement resource; and

15          said user profile and said resource profiles for  
16          controlling user access to said procurement resources.

1       13. The system of claim 12, said procurement resources  
2       further comprising:

3        vendor catalog;

4        a blanket order procurement contract for goods or  
5       services; and

6 a table of user profiles.

1 14. The system of claim 12, said procurement resources  
2 further comprising:

3 costs centers; and

4 accounting general ledger codes with company group  
5 specific accounting rules and defaults.

1 15. A program storage device readable by a machine,  
2 tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a  
3 machine to perform method steps for providing procurement  
4 services to a plurality of customer companies, said method  
5 steps comprising:

6 establishing a user profile for each person authorized  
7 by a customer company to access said procurement  
8 services;

9 associating each said company with a company group of  
10 related companies;

11           said user profile specifying for each said user a user  
12           company and company group;

13           providing for each procurement resource to be shared  
14           among said users a resource profile specifying for each  
15           resource those said companies to have access to said  
16           procurement resource; and

17           responsive to said user profile and said resource  
18           profiles, controlling user access to said procurement  
19           resources.

1       16. The program storage device of claim 15, said method  
2       steps further comprising providing said procurement  
3       resources in a front-end catalog and requisition server.

1       17. The program storage device of claim 16, said method  
2       steps further comprising the steps of:

3           receiving a user request from a first client browser to  
4           log in to said front-end server;

5           responsive to said request, providing a user interface

6           at said client browser only to procurement resources  
7           authorized by said user profile and said resource  
8           profiles.

1       18. The program storage device of claim 16, said method  
2       steps further comprising the steps of:

3           receiving requests from a plurality of users authorized  
4           by different company groups to enter a requisition to a  
5           vendor with respect to the same catalog or contract  
6           resource; and

7           generating separate purchase orders to said vendor with  
8           respect to requisitions originating with users from  
9           each said company group.

1       19. The program storage device of claim 18, said method  
2       steps further comprising the steps of:

3           leveraging procurement buys from a plurality of company  
4           groups with respect to the same volume specific  
5           contract for goods or services.

1       20. The program storage device of claim 16, said method  
2       steps further comprising the steps of:

3                 allowing said user to apply procurement charges to  
4                 charge centers only within his company group.

1       21. The program storage device of claim 17, said  
2       procurement resources including a vendor catalog.

1       22. The program storage device of claim 17, said  
2       procurement resources including a blanket order procurement  
3       contract for goods or services.

1       23. The program storage device of claim 17, said  
2       procurement resources including a user profile table.

1       24. The program storage device of claim 17, said  
2       procurement resources including costs centers.

1       25. The program storage device of claim 17, said

2 procurement resources including accounting general ledger  
3 codes with company group specific accounting rules and  
4 defaults.

1 26. A computer program product or computer program element  
2 for providing procurement services to a plurality of  
3 customer companies according to method steps comprising:

4 establishing a user profile for each person authorized  
5 by a customer company to access said procurement  
6 services;

7 associating each said company with a company group of  
8 related companies;

9 said user profile specifying for each said user a user  
10 company and company group;

11 providing for each procurement resource to be shared  
12 among said users a resource profile specifying for each  
13 resource those said companies to have access to said  
14 procurement resource; and

15 responsive to said user profile and said resource

16 profiles, controlling user access to said procurement  
17 resources.

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